

Academics, vocational training propel Career and Technical Education

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News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

Interim Commissioner of Education

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**Front cover:** Carpentry teacher Brad Moyes, right, helps Zack Williams measures a house perimeter on a building site during carpentry class at Henderson County Senior High School. Photo by Amy Wallot

## Talk to the Experts ...

## **About Certification**

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# Kentucky Teacher previews series on High Quality Instruction

Over the past three years, four Kentucky school districts (Boone, Daviess, Jefferson and Kenton) and the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) have been working together to help educators effectively identify problems, create solutions, develop and implement classroom strategies and then look at ways to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and learning as it relates to the instructional core, rather than simply through the Core Content for Assessment.

The instructional core support within schools and districts must be established by the development of a coherent vision about each element (student, teacher and content) and how they influence and are influenced by each other. Each element of the instructional core is a point of entry for improving teaching and learning. However, when you address or make changes to one of the elements, you must continue to think about the overall impact on all three.

As a result of this work, KDE has developed plans about how to best support the instructional core in all Kentucky districts and schools. KDE is developing resources that professional learning communities can use to plan for and deliver High Quality Instruction (HQI) to meet the needs of all students.

To support High Quality Instruction, educators must agree on what it looks like. As a result of reviewing the research on teaching and learning, five components have emerged:

 Learning climate — Teachers foster high, clear expectations and positive relationships while promoting active learning in a safe environment. Classroom assessment and reflection —
The teacher and student collaboratively
gather information and reflect on learning
through a systematic process that informs
instruction.

- Instructional rigor and student engagement—A teacher supports and encourages
  a student's commitment to initiate and
  complete complex, inquiry-based learning
  requiring creative and critical thinking
  with attention to problem solving.
- Instructional relevance A teacher has the ability to facilitate learning experiences that are meaningful to students and prepare them for their futures.
- Knowledge of content A teacher has understanding of and applies the current theories, principles, concepts and skills of a discipline.

Beginning in August, Kentucky Teacher will feature a series of articles that demonstrate these specific examples of HQI in Kentucky school districts. Each article will include Web site links to content-specific news that aligns with the HQI characteristics.

Teacher-friendly interactive documents featuring icons that connect users to information that illustrates, supports or explains the characteristics will be available on the KDE Web site. KDE also will offer a common set of characteristics of high-quality teaching and learning, which includes content-specific characteristics for science, mathematics, language arts, social studies, practical living and vocational studies, arts and humanities, technology and world languages.

Schools and districts may use these resources to provide support for the instructional core in Kentucky classrooms

and also begin to think about the further support needed to implement high-quality instruction for every student in Kentucky.

#### MORE INFO...

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/ ?jump=HQI



Photo by Amy Wall

## Helping hand

Principal James Meding helps kindergarten student Jacob Hubbard with a crayon color selection during Melanie Philpot's class at East Bernstadt Elementary School (East Bernstadt Independent). Philpot's class is one of three kindergarten classrooms at the school, which has students in grades P-8.

# Nominations open for 2010 Kentucky Teacher Awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2010 Kentucky Teacher Awards, sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Education and Ashland Inc., through the 2010 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Web site at www.kentuckytoy.com. The deadline for nominations is May 15.

Any full-time public school teacher in the state with at least three years of experience is eligible. Teachers may be nominated by students or their parents, teaching peers, principals or superintendents or anyone from the community who has an interest in honoring an outstanding educator.

All nominated teachers are required to complete a formal application, which must be submitted by June 30. Judging will take place in August by a blue ribbon panel of education professionals from around the state, and up to 24 Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Award winners will be announced in September. Following site visits with nine semifinalists in September and personal interviews with the top three candidates, the Kentucky Teacher of the Year will be announced in Frankfort. The Kentucky Teacher of the Year then will represent the state in the National Teacher of

the Year competition.

The Kentucky Teacher Awards program combines the best elements of the Ashland Inc. Teacher Achievement Awards and the Kentucky Teacher of the Year programs. This is the ninth year for this innovative collaboration between private industry and public education.

#### MORE INFO...

#### www.kentuckytoy.com

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# Stimulus funding welcomed, must be used wisely

It's no secret that Kentucky, along with the rest of the country, is experiencing troubling economic conditions that affect all aspects of state services, including the education system.

I know that everyone is anxiously awaiting information about the provisions of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), including how much money Kentucky (and school districts) will receive and the conditions surrounding that



Farris

funding. Please know that we share your interest as well as your level of concern and are committed to keeping you current on the provisions of this bill, because we know that it will have a great impact on all of us.

While considering how to share information with you about the ARRA, we have tried to balance two competing considerations — providing you information in a timely manner versus providing you correct information that you may rely upon to make decisions. To hold down miscommunication and possible misunderstanding, we have chosen to wait until we have been provided with official information from the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) before passing anything along to you.

Below is a brief summary of the types of additional funding state and local education agencies expect to receive under the major provisions of the act. This list is by no means complete and only includes the funding streams that are disseminated by the USDOE, not those that come from other agencies, such as school nutrition funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

#### Spring 2009 distribution will include:

- additional formula-based funding under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF), which will help restore state funding support to elementary, secondary and postsecondary education. These funds are designed to help stabilize state and local government budgets to minimize or avoid reductions in education spending.
- additional funding for programs required under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to provide supplementary education and related services to low-achieving and other students attending schools with high concentrations of low-income families
- increased funding for programs required

under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

• increased money for programs required under the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program to allow homeless children and youth equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as other students

#### Fall 2009 distribution will include:

- the remainder of the formula-based funding under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund
- the remainder of funding under IDEA and Title I, Part A programs
- additional funding for Title I School Improvement Grants
- additional funding for Education Technology State Grants, which improve student achievement through the use of technology in elementary and secondary schools, help all students become technologically literate by the end of the 8th grade and integrate technology with both teacher training and curriculum development, establishing research-based instructional methods that can be widely implemented Funds will become available through a competitive grant process for:
- statewide longitudinal data systems that enhance the ability of states to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze and use education data, including individual student records
- a Teacher Incentive Fund, which provides educators with incentives to take on additional responsibilities and leadership roles
- Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants, which strive to improve content knowledge, teaching methods and technology preparation

While this stimulus funding is welcomed by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), we also recognize that it is not a permanent solution. KDE and the Kentucky General Assembly must work diligently to avoid "funding cliffs" by investing ARRA funds in ways that minimize ongoing costs after the funding expires. These are one-time funds, and we need to find the best way to stretch every dollar and spend the money in ways that protect and support children without carrying continuing costs.

We all share the same ultimate goal: to save jobs and improve education. However, this goal requires balancing the need for a speedy release of funds with the need for aggressive and thoughtful school improvements and reform to improve results for our children.

Please know this information was current at the time of this issue going to print and that we may have released more up-to-date information before this publication reaches your mailbox. As soon as reliable information on the ARRA is available, we will pass it along to you. To take advantage of this unprecedented opportunity to improve our schools and benefits our students, our close collaboration and partnership is more important now than ever before. We're eager to begin putting these stimulus dollars to work in Kentucky school districts and using them to provide long-term stability to our economy.

#### **Dropout Prevention Summit**

While you are making plans for the fall, please save the date for the Kentucky Dropout Prevention Summit, which will be Sept. 11-12 at the Capital Plaza Hotel in downtown Frankfort. You are invited to join experts and practitioners in presentations and discussions of successful dropout prevention strategies. Presented by First Lady Jane Beshear and the Kentucky Edu-

cation and Workforce Development Cabinet, in conjunction with America's Promise Alliance, the summit's goal is to answer the question of how can we better serve the thousands of Kentucky students who leave high school every year without obtaining a diploma. Be on the lookout for more information in the August issue of *Kentucky Teacher*.

#### A new chapter for me

As you may know, I've accepted the position of superintendent of the Clark County school district. It's an opportunity to provide guidance and leadership to a school district that has great potential. I accepted the position with mixed feelings, because I have enjoyed my time here at KDE, and I've learned so much from all of you. I will continue to serve as interim education commissioner until July 1. The Kentucky Board of Education will discuss and provide information about the department's leadership soon.

Thanks for all that you do to ensure that every public school child in Kentucky is proficient and prepared for success.

(Contact Interim Commissioner Farris on these topics at elaine.farris@education.ky.gov.)



Photo by Amy Wallo

## Student journalism

English teacher Brenda Lambert and senior Bethany Hall laugh as they come across a silly picture taken for the student newspaper. Lambert was helping Hall edit the photos during journalism class at Berea Community High School (Berea Independent). The class publishes two pages in the local newspaper every other week. "It's one of the highlights of my day," Lambert said.

# Board sets timeline, criteria for hiring new commissioner

By Matthew Tungate

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Kentucky would have a new commissioner of education in place by Aug. 1 under a timeline agreed upon by the Kentucky Board of Education and the firm in charge of the search.

During the state board meeting in April, representatives of Greenwood/Asher and Associates laid out a plan in which they would recruit top candidates for the job as well as advertise statewide and nationally and then extensively vet the board's top choices.

Under the proposed timeline, the board will select 8-12 applicants for preliminary reviews around the time of its June 11-12 board meeting. About two weeks later, the board would begin the first round of interviews. A second round of interviews is slated for the second week of July.

Jan Greenwood, president and partner of the search firm, said she would expect the board to select a new commissioner at that time.

"Typically the appointment of the commissioner would be at the end of your final interviews," she said.

The board made it clear to Greenwood and Betty Asher, vice president and partner, that it wanted to move expediently on the search.

"The board would agree this is 'job one' for us," Chairman Joe Brothers said.

Greenwood and Asher presented preliminary job descriptions and advertisements to the board, requesting feedback on what additional traits board members would like to see in a new commissioner.

The initial drafts called for candidates with "a clear vision of quality education" and a track record of results, including reducing achievement gaps. The candidate also should be "committed to a student-first philosophy," among

other criteria.

Board member Dorie Combs said a new commissioner would have to be "visionary" as Kentucky makes changes to its standards, assessment and accountability system.

"The model is not there," she said. "We're going to have to invent it."

Board member Billy Harper said he would like someone who can lead Kentucky to achieve worldclass standards.

"I think we ought to get someone who's willing to take on a challenge," he said.

He cited University of Kentucky President Lee Todd as an example of such a leader. Greenwood/Asher was the search firm UK used when it hired Todd.

Vice Chairman C.B. Akins said the new commissioner would need to be skilled in working in "less-than-ideal" financial circumstances.

"I'd like someone who knows how to make the brick without the straw," he said, "a person who speaks of challenges and not of barriers, someone who doesn't waste an inordinate amount of time talking about what we don't have, who is willing to take it as is, show up and work with what is there, and build excellence out of what other folks would say is inadequate, and will settle for nothing less than excellence."

Some board members wanted a commissioner with teaching experience, but others did not see that as a requirement. Ultimately, the board decided that teaching experience would be preferred but not required.

The board also agreed to provide a list of other education stakeholders for Greenwood/Asher to ask about desirable qualities in a new commissioner.

The board did not set a new salary for the commissioner, but suggested Greenwood/Asher could

reference former commissioner Jon E. Draud's salary and say Kentucky plans to stay in the top third nationally in pay.

"We're going to be competitive, but we're looking for a mission-minded individual," Brothers said.

Asher also discussed the firm's "Search Committee Code of Ethics." She suggested the board use Brothers as the spokesman for the search and said her company promises confidentiality to candidates.

"Most of the people that are going to be your leading candidates are probably people who are not looking for other opportunities, and they are people who we are having to work hard to bring into the pool and most of them will not want their own systems to know they are even considering making a move," she said.

Greenwood told the board her firm will do a thorough investigation of each candidate's professional history. She said she has done searches where candidates are good in interviews but did not accurately represent their credentials

"Some of us have some experience in this area," Brothers said.

This is the board's third search for a commissioner in less than three years. Gene Wilhoit left the job in November 2006. Barbara Erwin, from Illinois, accepted then declined the job in May 2007 amid scrutiny of her background. The board named Draud commissioner in December 2007, but he resigned in December 2008, citing health issues.

A different national search firm helped in the Erwin hire. The board conducted its own search before hiring Draud. Besides UK, Florida-based Greenwood/Asher has conducted searches for the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, Northern Kentucky University, the University of Texas



Photo by Amy Wall

Fayette County Superintendent Stu Silberman, right, hugs Kentucky Board of Education Vice Chair C.B. Akins during the state board meeting April 1. The board approved a resolution honoring Silberman as Superintendent of the Year.

and Florida International University, among others. The board will pay the company no more than \$120,000 for the search.

Also during the board meeting, 15 new schools were announced as joining AdvanceKentucky, an Advanced Placement teacher training and incentive program (see page 11 for more on AdvanceKentucky). Among other items, the board also:

- heard a report that all of Kentucky's 174 public schools have implemented the core components of the state's student information system, provided through Infinite Campus
- heard an update of the Assist and Support School Improvement Success Team (ASSIST) initiative, which is designed to provide support and resources to schools and districts in need of improvement based on state and federal academic accountability measures

- approved Catherine Fernandez, a teacher in the Henderson County school district, and David McFadden, a teacher in the Laurel County school district, for the State Textbook Commission
- approved the district facility plan for Bell County and district facility plan amendment for Ballard County
- appointed board members Dorie Combs, Doug Hubbard and Austin Moss to a work group that will study sports safety as mandated by House Bill 383
- heard an update from the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development and Kentucky Center for Mathematics on statewide coaching initiatives

The board will hold its annual retreat May 12 and 13 in Frankfort.

MORE INFO... www.education.ky.gov/ JumpTo/?jump=KBOE

# An Apple a day for Todd students, teachers

By Susan Riddell

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There's a point in the movie *Good Will Hunting* where Matt Damon's character asks the question, "How do you like them apples?"

Were that question being posed to students and teachers in the Todd County school district, the overwhelming response would be very positive.

That's because all Todd County Central High School students and teachers have been using Apple MacBook laptops in conjunction with Project 21c, an initiative bringing 21st-century tools to student learning while enhancing teaching for educators.

"Project 21c is opening a whole new world of learning to our students," said Rory Fundora, chief information officer and district technology coordinator for the Todd County school district. "Even in a short time, we have seen a transformation of teaching and learning in all grades. Project 21c has helped turn up the rigor in our classrooms while making the learning relevant. We're reaching students in a way that is native to them, with technology."

What makes this initiative unique to Kentucky is that all students and teachers at the school have their own laptops, and most have access to them 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Teachers received laptops in November a few months before students. This allowed teachers to get professional development needed to make the transition smoother.

"We are using a train-the-trainers cadre approach to train our staff," said Amy Ramage, Todd County assessment coordinator. "Each school has four teachers participating who then train other teachers on implementation. The professional development is ongoing with Apple throughout the next few years."

Students received their own laptops in January. In all, more than 920 laptops are being used throughout the district, including some 150 for teachers. Mobile carts



Photos by Amy Wallot

Sophomore Joseph Daily, left, checks out a laptop from Jonathan Rogers at Todd County Central High School. While most students use their laptops throughout the school year, other students check out the laptops for use during school hours only.



Sophomores Kianna Morrow and Dalton Harper use a laptop to work together on an assignment during Kadi Ralston's English II class. Ralston said the school's Project 21c initiative is helping all students refine their online learning.

have been set up at elementary and middle schools.

"Teachers currently check out the cart and take it into their classrooms," Ramage said of the elementary and middle school teachers. "The mobile cart serves as the docking station to charge the laptops. Students pull out the laptops (from the docking station) and return them after their use."

"What makes this project unique is that it is more than just the 1:1

at the high school," Fundora added. "It is a district-wide implementation that affects all grades. That is why we called it Project21c instead of just a 1:1. What our students are already doing at the elementary level is blowing my mind. By the time that group gets to the high school, the sky is the limit. Students are learning how to podcast, do presentations, create movies and more."

Each high school student has been assigned his or her own laptop to be used in school, at home, wherever there's a wireless connection. They will keep the same

laptops throughout their time at Todd County Central High.

Students don't have to pay for the laptops, just a \$40 insurance fee per semester. Students not paying the insurance fee use the laptops during school hours only. They must return the laptops before leaving campus each day.

"I began to use it for taking notes and researching topics," junior Jonathan Rogers said of his laptop. "I am now able to be more efficient with all of my work. I can now keep things organized and be able to work more quickly."

Rogers also works the help desk for the laptops, and he passes out computers to day users. This service has especially been beneficial to students who don't have access to the technology at home, he said.

"Students who do not have home computers now have a means of doing all kinds of stuff," Rogers said. "For example, now students who are required to type papers have a means of doing so without having to stay after school."

This initiative is helping all students refine their online learning, according to Kadi Ralston, an English teacher at the high school.

"I have found that downloading documents, saving, copying and pasting were skills that students — especially those without access to computers at home — were needing," Ralston said. "In addition to that, the fantastic resources on the Internet and the activities that can be performed through the computers have changed the motivational level of students and created a climate that is focused on learning and finding new and fun ways to create meaning out of the content being taught.

"For instruction," she added, "this initiative has been pivotal in creating a classroom environment that is focused on integrating technology with traditional teaching practices."

Social studies teacher Billy Shanks agreed, adding that he's noticed an overall improvement in reading by his students.

"The laptops are a tool for the students to use like a calculator, hammer or text," Shanks said. "The computers allow more flexibility for the learner and teacher to become more creative when dealing with new information, and lessons are now geared toward a wider range of learning abilities. I find the students are beginning to read more from their laptops than from the texts, and our lessons are geared to improve reading comprehension, thus higher understanding."

Another benefit of all students having laptops, which are monitored for inappropriate use, is that it greatly reduces the use of paper copies. When homework is done online through a teacher's Web site, there tend to be fewer incomplete assignments, according to Shanks.

"By using drop boxes, rather than paper copies, the old excuses for not completing assignments don't apply," Shanks said.

Ralston added that she has come to appreciate having a "green" classroom thanks to the laptops.

"My Web site has become so instrumental to my classroom that I find myself working very hard to provide opportunities to use their computers," Ralston said. "As a result of the students having access to documents, worksheets and other materials on their laptops, I have made very few copies since the rollout in January."

While this effort is costly (the value of one MacBook is \$1,200), it is one more than worth the price, according to Fundora.

"As far as I know, there are only a handful of districts across the United States that have taken on such a project. It is a huge financial commitment, and in today's economy a tough one," Fundora said. "However, we are in the business of educating students by equipping them with the skills to make it in today's world, not the world from generations past. It's not a question of 'Can we afford to do it?' it is, 'Can we afford not to do it?' It is a commitment we have made to our students, to reach them, teach them and to change their lives.

"It's not changing what you teach," Fundora added. "Teachers have years of experience that make them very valuable to their students. It is just changing how you teach."

#### MORE INFO...

www.todd.kyschools.us/ project21c/Project\_21c/P21c\_ Home.html

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# Book serves as compass for new teachers, guide for experienced pros

Book Review by Jerry L. Parks, Ed.D, NBCT Georgetown Middle School

"Harsh. I am harsh. I am bold. It is a must. I cannot take their excuses..."

With this philosophy, Michele Luck, a history teacher at Bryan Station High School (Fayette County), offers guidance and personal insight to teachers in her new book *A Lesson Plan for Teachers, New and Old.* 

Luck loves teaching, and even more, loves being a teacher. She feels teachers are born, not made. They either have the gift or they don't. Whether one accepts this premise or not, it is hard to argue with her creative, and often non-conventional, approach to teaching. Her discussions on collaboration, effective grading procedures and the social aspect of dealing with colleagues and principals are direct, uncompromising and not always what might be considered politically correct today. For such candor, Luck makes no apology.

There is no dearth of pedantic, philosophical tomes written for educators. Many are helpful. Most are a snooze. But Luck's cogent and practical advice is a welcome departure. It is written from experience, not from the ivory tower of theory. Suggestions such as dividing the classroom into realms of "ownership" and strategies to work with the obstinate learner are, at the very least, thought-provoking.

Not everyone will wholeheartedly embrace every aspect of Luck's teaching philosophy. Some of her ideas may be unconventional (no daily lesson plans), while others are standard fare (grades should be earned, never given). Some may be controversial (no bathroom passes; writing notes on student notes), and some ideas will simply stir dis-

agreement (permitting obstinate students to fail). But her emphasis on multiple-intelligence assessment, consistency and routine in the classroom, the importance of keeping the grading process simple and making students accountable are strategies every new teacher would do well to heed.

The author has taught at numerous grade levels, and many of the topics she discusses are seldom addressed in teacher-preparation classes. For example, her real-world discussion of planning, objectives, goals and syllabus construction are infinitely more practical than typical textbook definitions. Especially cogent is her discussion on organization — not merely for the benefit of the teacher but for the students as well. Luck rightly asserts that kids like structure and function best in a structured, organized atmosphere. Keeping it simple is the heart and soul of her teaching style but starting with end goals and then backtracking to the objectives used to reach those goals is a novel approach not every new teacher will be comfortable with.

Luck emphasizes goal-setting for the high-achieving classroom but never loses the reader in the quagmire of impersonal theory. The often-stated but seldom understood truism that "the quiet classroom is not always the most effective classroom" is explained adeptly and convincingly. However, the strength of the work is the author's warmth exhibited through her use of illustration, example and modeling. The author writes in a conversational and anecdotal style and is not afraid to discuss her failures as well as her successes. A Lesson Plan for Teachers, New and Old is as much a personal reflective narrative on the teaching

Photo by Amy Wallo

Michele Luck teaches during her world history class at Bryan Station High School (Fayette County). The students were studying the time period between World War I and World War II in small-group activities. Luck is the author of A Lesson Plan for Teachers, New and Old.

experience as it is a guide. Many of the suggestions presented will require the reader to consider his or her own school policies and student clientele.

While the author calls herself "a dictator" (benevolent, to be sure), she understands that teachers influence lives and serve as role models. She is a firm believer in respect and personal responsibility and readily admits that it is her students, not her, who must do the adapting in her classroom. She is concerned about today's emphasis on tolerance and feels that, all too often, educational assessment bows to the sacred cow of social promotion. While one might wish for more bulleted reminders or perhaps a bit more discussion on dealing with parents, the author sees teaching as an art, not a science, and an ever-adapting skill rather than a traditional model of strict pedagogy.

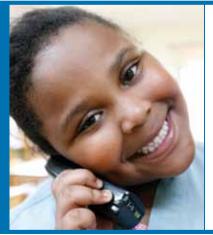
The most helpful advice for the new teacher in *A Lesson Plan for Teachers, New and Old* is the author's emphasis on creativity in the classroom — not bring afraid to take a chance in making a lesson memorable. Of course, this is easier said than done. Nevertheless, the author inspires the reader through her own modeling and her enthusiasm for teaching pervades every page. Such opening day icebreakers as the "the first-day bag" and the importance of creating a classroom "community" will be invaluable to

new teachers. While many tips will have to be modified according to grade level, others, such as her syllabus template and her essay on student engagement as a behavior-management tool, are excellent at any level. The high school teacher will appreciate Luck's reflective thoughts on graduation at the book's close, but primary and middle school teachers will obviously find this chapter significantly less relevant.

Few teachers will agree with Luck on every strategy, and some may question whether her style would work at all outside her own classroom. But Luck's heart and passion for teaching stands out on every page of A Lesson Plan for Teachers, New and Old. The author supports the idea that teachers — like students — are unique and the teacher reading this book will have to decide what will work and what won't. Whether one agrees with the author or not, this book will serve as a compass for the new teacher and a verification guide for many old pros. While admittedly born as the by-product of the author's frustration, the book will save untold misery to the novice teacher entering the real world of education. It is a work I wish I'd owned 20 years ago.

MORE INFO...

www.lulu.com



Kentucky Teacher wants to know what you think, what you need from the Department of Education, what you want to see in future issues.

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# Digital mathematics a plus for students, teachers

By Susan Riddell

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Wearing headphones, Juan Rodriguez stares intently into his laptop. He's paying just enough attention to the teacher standing before him to connect that what she is teaching is the same thing he's looking at on the computer.

The Shelby County East Middle School 8th-grader isn't goofing off while teacher Donna Whitis is talking to her class. Quite the opposite, Rodriguez is intently working on learning the day's lesson.

"Sometimes I have to get in front of him and go like this because he'll be totally into his computer," teacher Donna Whitis said of Rodriguez as she snaps her fingers repeatedly. "He loves how Math-Player reads complex equations, and it really helps him with his math skills."

MathPlayer is software that works in conjunction with the "text to speech" tool in Read & Write Gold. It helps students with mild to serious disabilities view mathematics expressions and have them read aloud in a spoken language.

The digital math textbook was provided on a CD in an accessible format (i.e., MathML) by Pearson Publishing Company in collaboration with the project.

The way MathPlayer reads digital mathematics originally catered toward visually impaired students, but other students, such as Rodriguez, are using it with great success.

"It's a lot of fun," Rodriguez said of the digital mathematics textbook. "It reads to me, and I can follow along better in class without getting too far behind. My grades are better now, too."

Whitis added that not only has it helped Rodriguez's mathematic skills, it's helped him emotionally, too.

"Juan has improved grades because of this, but his confidence is up, and that's just as critical," Whitis said. "He volunteers now in class. Before, he wouldn't. The changes in him are astounding."

Rodriguez isn't alone. He's one of 14 students at Shelby County East Middle using the digital mathematics textbooks. Two students at Clark Middle School



Photo by Amy Wallot

Eighth-grade student Juan Rodriguez demonstrates digital mathematics aids in Donna Whitis' class at Shelby County East Middle School. The computer program can read complex mathematics problems and also can offer to translate the problems to other languages or Braille.

(Clark County) also are involved in the project.

The main benefit of the digital mathematics textbook is its ability to read a problem or equation to a student. For instance, if a student is looking at the equation  $y = 3x^2 + 2x - 1$ , he or she can highlight the equation and through digital mathematics hear the phrase "y equals 3 x squared plus 2x minus 1."

While this tool is obviously helpful to a student with visual impairments, it also helps those with any number of learning disabilities. For example, some of Whitis' students simply have trouble understanding the concept of what an equation is saying literally. The digital textbooks' aid is critical in preventing those students from falling further behind.

"There are children who are ahead of others when

it comes to math vocabulary, so sometimes the ones behind were missing out on important concepts," said Whitis, who is one of two teachers at Shelby County East Middle who uses the technology. "This evens things up a bit."

The Read & Write Gold software has another interesting use. Students can highlight a word or phrase they are having trou-

More about this project

Project SMART (Supported Math Accessibility Reading Tool) is studying the digital mathematics technology used in the Shelby and Clark county school districts. Researchers are investigating the impact of providing students with disabilities computerized reading supports for mathematics content as part of the federally funded study at the University of Kentucky.

www.ihdi.uky.edu/ilssa/projects/smart.asp

ble with and call up a dictionary that will help explain the words in question.

It's a quick reference a student can make without holding up the teacher and the lesson.

Whitis said the digital textbooks allow students to get a quick taste of the day's lesson prior to her speaking to the entire class.

"Students using this can look on my agenda to see what I am covering and then they can go ahead and start listening to the program," she said. "I point something out once the lesson is started, then they can go back and listen again if they need to."

Whitis has seen firsthand how all of the students are more comfortable asking for help now thanks to the use of the software.

"Too many kids will not say they don't understand something," Whitis said. "They'll just go on to the next thing without getting it. Sometimes, the girls in my class will ask me afterward. Most of the boys just don't. It's a middle school macho thing, and that's perfectly normal. They are

embarrassed to speak up. This way, they don't have to be embarrassed to ask for help. The help comes to them."

Whitis admitted she had reservations about digital mathematics prior to trying it this year but is completely on board now.

"I did not know if my students would take it seriously or that they would actually read the assignment," she said. "I did not want anyone playing around. You have to be willing to give up some of your control, too. I want to be able to monitor every aspect of the lesson I am teaching.

"It helps that I do not have to review nonmath vocabulary with the students in order for them to comprehend the lesson," she added. "I know that every child is hearing the same thing said the same way. It makes the job easier once you get the hang of it."

MORE INFO...

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# Working together

## **Academics, vocational training propel Career and Technical Education**

By Matthew Tungate

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picture of a woman looking
to be in her late teens,
dressed in nurses' clothes
and standing with an elderly man,
hangs on the wall in the office of
Debbie Anderson, Career and
Technical Education division
director for the Kentucky Depart-

ment of Education.

The young woman had worked to be a certified nursing assistant while she was at Shelby County Area Technology Center, where Anderson was principal at the time. The student went on to community college to become a licensed practical nurse, which is what she was at the time of the picture. By going to night school, she became a registered nurse by the time she was 21.

"The other neat thing about the picture is that the gentleman there is my father," Anderson said. "It's just an example of how we have to realize our students aren't going to leave us. They're going to be somewhere and they're going to affect us. It's our responsibility to train that future generation because they might be taking care of you some day."

Nursing is just one of the many careers students can prepare for by taking career and technical education classes in Kentucky. Career and technical education (CTE) is organized into nine program areas, encompassing 14 career clusters and majors.

The classes are increasingly technology oriented and prepare students for cutting-edge careers, either directly out of high school or following additional postsecondary education, Anderson said.

She said three career and technical schools in Henderson, Jessamine and Scott counties are good examples of the diversity offered in Kentucky.

Each is unique and a model for career and technical education, Anderson said, with each approach tied to its community's needs and culture.

All three are operated by the local school district. There are 40 such schools in the state. Another 55 area technology centers are operated through the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, staffed by state employees and using a common curriculum. Multiple school districts feed those schools, she said.

Most area technology centers will offer traditional programs such as automotive, welding, machine tool, business, and nursing and prenursing programs, Anderson said. Some offer unique opportunities, such as aviation mechanics, fire safety, homeland security, marine mechanic technology and HVAC.

Every career and tech program has an advisory committee that includes all the stakeholders in the program — employers, school offi-



Photos by Amy Wallot

Senior Erica Langley counts pills for a prescription at Dunaway's Imperial Pharmacy in Henderson through the co-op program at Henderson County Senior High School. Langley plans to study nursing after graduation.

cials, postsecondary representatives and parents — to better serve the needs of each community, Anderson said.

If career education or technology programs isolate themselves and don't interact with the community, they won't thrive, Anderson said. "Where you see people working together to make it better, that's where you're going to see the innovation," she said.

Victor Doty, principal of Career and Technical Education at Henderson County Senior High School, said the strong ties with business and industry in Henderson have developed over the years through the school's advisory committees.

"They provide advice to the school as to what should be taught and the type of equipment that is needed," he said. "They also provide work-based learning and employment opportunities."

Career and technical education also requires constant professional development from teachers, Anderson said. She said she got her college degree "at the dawn of the PC age," and her first job was teaching students word processing. She had to receive additional training just to do her job, and that was right out of college.

"It's a constant upgrade of skills and staying current with what is going on in business and industry," Anderson said.

Present-day career and technical education is changing the attitude that vocational education is for students who struggle academically, Anderson said. The Kentucky Education Reform Act emphasizes academics and accountability within vocational education.

For instance, programs that prepare certified nursing assistants show students paths to becoming a registered nurse, physical therapist or x-ray technologist. And those paths include rigorous academic integration.

"Career and technical education will no longer be a means



Sophomore Taylor Husson works on a model golf course hole for his turf management class at Jessamine County Career and Technology Center.

to an end," she said. "It's going to be a jumping-off place that will allow students to build on a career and take it to whatever level they want to."

Doty said he sees career and technical education becoming fully integrated with academics.

"The integration of CTE and academic classes increases the rigor and relevance in all classrooms," he said. "The students will be more excited, and their performance will increase."

Dexter Knight, principal of the Jessamine Career and Technology Center, said Jessamine County has intentionally blurred the lines between career and technical education and academic studies to demonstrate to students the relevance of why mathematics and science concepts are important in engineering, agriculture, health and other career majors.

"Students at the center have math teachers teaching College Algebra and AP Statistics alongside Digital Electronics (Engineering Career major) as well as science teachers teaching AP Biology and Forensic Science along with Anatomy and Physiology and Principles of Biomedical Science," he said. "Students can see the relevance immediately as teachers are discussing the connections between the career clusters and majors and the academic concepts important to each area."

Tor that reason, career and technical education is always at the forefront of every discussiononsecondaryschoolreform, Anderson said. Keeping students in school is all about engaging them, "and that's what career and technical education can do — engage students in learning, make it relevant

#### **Career and Technical Education**

**Mission:** The mission of Career and Technical Education is to assist schools in providing students with skills necessary for a successful transition to postsecondary education or work and a desire for life-long learning in a global society.

**Purpose:** Career and Technical Education is an essential component of the high school curriculum. For many students, it represents as much as a third of their high school experience. It is a critical component in meeting the needs of students in academic achievement, career exploration, career preparation and leadership development. Successful transition to postsecondary education, work or the military is one of the goals of Kentucky's educational system.

For additional information, refer to Work-Based Learning Guide 2000 — www.kde.state.ky.us/osis/voced/wbl\_guide.asp and Kentucky Administration Regulation (705 KAR 4:041) for Cooperative Program Standard — www.ked. state.ky.us.osis.voced.pathway\_career.asp.



Agri-biology teacher Christi Hack helps sophomores Garrett Becknell and Lena Chilton prepare cattle blood for DNA testing at the Jessamine County Career and Technology Center. The school has a large agricultural program that focuses on animal science, food production and food science, emphasizing agri-biology using a state-of-the-art biology lab.

to their lives and their future," she said.

Students might start in a business program as freshmen, and they take business courses every year in high school, so they may be more connected with that teacher than any other single part of their high school careers, she said.

"Schools have excellent methods of assisting students with special needs. Gifted and talented students and exceptional students find various services available that assist them through high school. Too often, the students that find themselves in the middle of the high school population are not making the most of their opportunities," she said. "It is this student 'in the middle' that can be served well by being focused on an area of interest in career and technical education."

Over the last nine years, data show that students in career and technical education are improving on state test scores faster than those who aren't, Anderson said.

"We always have academic teachers tell us how much career and tech means to students when it comes to teamwork," she said.

Traditional hands-on vocational training won't go away, Anderson said. But 99.99 percent of automotive programs are not what someone might expect because of the amount of technology. There will

be diagnostic equipment and troubleshooting rather than greasy repair.

"It's not shadetree mechanics," she said. "You won't walk in and find kids working on a 1963 Chevy."

Knight said career and technical education has "reinvented" itself in recent years. Students still learn the same basics and principles they always have, such as how to read a tape measure or how to strike an arc and run a bead in welding. But programs like drafting have evolved into computer-aided drafting.

"We still need students trained in career majors such as auto repair, masonry, plumbing, construction, welding, etc., as these areas are very important to the local, state and national economy," he said. "The technology in every area, however, has changed dramatically, and students must be kept up-to-date on the changes in their

respective career cluster or area.

"Successful CTE programs have proven their value by reinforcing what students are learning in the classroom (both CTE and academic) in an applied setting where students have a better understanding of the concepts."

## In more detail

#### Henderson County

Career and technical education is a part of Henderson County Senior High. But that wing of the building will have everything from automotive technology to health sciences and pre-engineering, Anderson said.

"Henderson to me is a perfect blend of all of it," she said. "They probably have the greatest variety of career and technical programs of any school in the state."

Henderson has a diversity of industries both there and across

## Program areas

Career and technical courses should be selected to complement the required academic courses that prepare students for successful transition to postsecondary education or the workforce within their area of career interest. Recommended courses are included for each of the following areas:

Agriculture
Business Education
Family and Consumer Science
Health Science
Industrial Education

Information Technology Technology Education Marketing Education Pathway to Careers the river in Indiana.

"Because of that, they've had some really good leadership there on the career and tech side," Anderson said.

Principal Doty, "is just a great leader in knowing what the school needs, making those industry and school connections, and developing those programs," she said.

"It's pretty impressive when you walk into a health science program on the high school level and there are four teachers," Anderson said.

Doty said the career clusters are based on community needs identified by advisory committees made up of people from business and industry.

"I think all of the classes are interesting and offer exciting opportunities for students. The Health Science cluster offers the opportunity for each senior to work in the occupation of his or her choice," he said. "The carpentry class offers the students the opportunity to build a house each year. Job shadowing is offered between the junior and senior year in many of the career clusters. The students spend 20 hours shadowing employees in our community when school is not in session."

Of the 2,200 students at Henderson County Senior High, 1,200 (or about 55 percent) are career and technical education students, Anderson said. Typically, that number is 30-40 percent.

#### **■** Jessamine County

The Jessamine Career and Technology Center opened in August 2006, and Anderson called Principal Dexter Knight and the community "visionary" in how the school operates.

Career and tech programs used to be a place for students who were not academically successful, she said.

"Their thinking is, 'We don't look at career and tech as an alternative, we look at is as a part of the essential piece of education," she said.

The school has a large agricultural program that focuses on animal science, food production

and food science, emphasizing agri-biology using a state-of-the-art biology lab.

She also singled out the schools' pre-engineering, bio-medical and Information Technology programs, among others.

Students can receive dual and articulated college credit in numerous classes, Knight said.

"All the career clusters at the center are rich in technology and infused with academic content. Content is delivered through project, activity and problem-based instruction, which increases engagement while improving retention of CTE standards and content," he said.

The local emergency medical technician squad teaches classes required for emergency medical technician (EMT) certification to students.

"So they built things in that are really important to that community and where the jobs are and where the interest is for the kids," Anderson said.

Knight said his son took the EMT class and decided (his senior year) to major in pre-nursing. "He wants to be an ER/trauma or flight nurse," he said. Three other students from the class have been hired into the county's EMT squad, he said.

#### Scott County

Anderson said Scott County is unique because of its relationship with Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky Inc.

Scott has many of the same programs as other schools except with an emphasis on manufacturing, she said.

Scott officials are building a high-tech school, Anderson said. Every lab will be flanked by two classrooms. So, the bio-medical science lab will have a biology classroom and a mathematics classroom attached to it, she said. Students would take their bio-medical science classes and their biology and mathematics classes in that building. Those three teachers will thread career and technical elements with academic areas, Anderson said.

"It creates that interdisciplinary experience for those students," she said.

#### MORE INFO...

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# Two schools selected as prestigious Schools to Watch

The Kentucky Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform has selected two schools as 2009 Kentucky Schools to Watch. The schools are South Oldham Middle School (Oldham County), which serves students in grades 6-8 and Auburn School (Logan County), which serves students in grades P-8. This is the second time that each of these schools has been recognized as a School to Watch.

"These schools are true communities of learning and reflect best practice," said Fran Salyers, Kentucky Schools to Watch program director.

The Kentucky Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform selected each school for its academic excellence, its responsiveness to the needs and interests of young adolescents and for being committed to helping all students achieve at high levels. In addition, each school has strong leadership, teachers who work together to improve curriculum and instruction and an organization that sustains continuous improvement and achievement.

The Schools to Watch program, currently in 17 states, is part of an initiative developed and guided by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. Schools are recognized for a three-

year period; then, at the end of three years, a school must reapply. For the current three-year period, there are about 200 schools across the United States that have been designated as Schools to Watch. Fifteen of those schools are in Kentucky.

"We are pleased that our Schools to Watch program has shown that schools can meet high academic expectations while preserving a commitment to healthy development and equity for all students," said National Forum Executive Director Deborah Kasak. "These Schools to Watch are indeed special. They have proven that it is possible to overcome barriers to achieving excellence, and any middle-level school in any state can truly learn from their examples."

Schools submitted a written application showing how they meet criteria for excellence developed by the National Forum. Teams then visited schools that appeared to meet the criteria to observe classrooms and interview administrators, teachers, students and parents. The teams also looked at achievement data, suspension rates, quality of lessons, student work and other school documents.

Launched in 1999, the Schools to Watch program identifies middle-

grades schools across the country that are meeting or exceeding 37 criteria developed by the National Forum. In 2002, the National Forum began working with states to replicate the Schools to Watch program as a way to introduce the forum's criteria for high-performance, identify middle-grades schools that meet or exceed that criteria and accelerate reform in middle-level schools.

The National Forum provides training and support for each state as they implement their Schools to Watch programs. State programs must be a collaborative effort of different education organizations. In Kentucky, the lead organization is the Kentucky Center for Middle School Academic Achievement (CMSAA), housed at Eastern Kentucky University. Other organizations involved are the Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky Middle School Association, and Kentucky Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform.

MORE INFO ... www.schoolstowatch.org www.middleschoolhouse.eku.

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## Squeamish science

Emily Bryant, left, and Abigail Zinser react to dissecting a frog in Steve Metcalfe's 7th-grade science class at Eminence Middle School (Eminence Independent). Eminence Independent is one of the smallest districts in Kentucky, serving 630 students in preschool through grade 12.

## EXPLORE and PLAN results released

Kentucky's 8th- and 10th-grade public school students participated in a statewide administration of the EXPLORE and PLAN assessments in the fall of 2008, and overall school scores moved up slightly in most subject areas tested. For the 2008 administration, Kentucky's overall scores increased in nearly every subject area.

In the 2008 administration, 48,653 8th-grade Kentucky students in 324 public schools took the EXPLORE assessment. The scoring scale for the assessment is from 1 to 25.

In the 2008 administration, 50,531 10th-grade Kentucky students in 229 public schools took the PLAN assessment. The scoring scale for the assessment is from 1 to 32.

The national normative data for EXPLORE and PLAN are based on students who took all four academic tests within standard time limits as part of a national study conducted in the fall of 2005.

MORE INFO... www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/ ?jump=EXPLOREPLAN0809

## EPSB Online payment service available for educators

Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) E-Pay electronic payment service offers Kentucky teachers and administrators online access to resources certification applications, renewals, rank change and online payments. EPSB's E-Pay provides a streamlined and simplified process for payment of certification fees, which were formerly only available with a certified cashier's check or money order. Tutorials also are available for those new to the EPSB Web site.

In addition to online payments, the EPSB Web site features e-service options that provide educators with timely, efficient and secure access to individual certification information. Teachers and administrators can access their information anytime from home or school in a real-time, safe and secure environment. By using the EPSB online tracking tool, educators also can determine the current status of their certificates, see if any documentation is missing and track their payment history.

Educators can check the status of their applications by going to the Web site and clicking on "View My Application History." This will provide up-to-the-minute status of each document pertaining to applications. If cases are complete, applicants will receive an estimate of when the certificates will be

#### MORE INFO... www.kyepsb.net

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EXPLORE Scores from Fall 2006, 2007 and 2008 Administrations					
	AVERAGESCORES				
SUBJECT	KENTUCKY			NATION	
	2006	2007	2008	Norms set in 2005	
English	13.6	13.7	13.8	14.2	
Mathematics	14.2	14.4	14.6	15.1	
Reading	13.8	13.7	13.9	13.8	
Science	15.8	15.8	16.0	15.9	
Composite	14.5	14.5	14.7	14.9	

PLAN Scores from Fall 2006, 2007 and 2008 Administrations						
	AVERAGE SCORES					
SUBJECT		KENTUCKY	NATION			
	2006	2007	2008	Norms set in 2005		
English	15.6	15.3	15.9	16.9		
Mathematics	16.3	16.2	16.4	17.4		
Reading	16.0	16.1	16.0	16.9		
Science	17.3	17.2	17.4	18.2		
Composite	16.4	16.3	16.6	17.5		

# Kentucky schools achieving through Advanced Placement testing

By Susan Riddell

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Athena Waddell, a science teacher at South Laurel High School (Laurel County), says she is no longer "shoving" content at her Advanced Placement (AP) Environmental Science students, thanks in large part to AdvanceKentucky (AdvanceKY).

"Mine was one of the classes here that was just one semester prior to this year, and through the AdvanceKY grant, we're able to go year-long," Waddell said. "The lab work is really what students needed, more handson lessons, independent work and long-term projects. Before, we didn't have enough time to do those things properly. We're more in depth with the subject matter as opposed to just shoving it at them, so the kids seem to really be getting into it."

Coury Leathers, a Marion County High School AP English teacher, also is amazed at the great things happening in her district through AdvanceKY.

"This year, we implemented a new AP English class, AP English Language and Composition ... and our enrollment is about 100," said Leathers, who added that middle school grades also are expressing interest in making use of released AP tests. "Our AP English Literature enrollment increased from 40 to 65. There are more minority students and students eligible for free and reduced-price meals enrolled in these courses.

"The training has led to more effective teaching strategies, higher expectations in our classrooms and open discussions between our vertical teams," Leathers added. "These are just a few of the many signs of success I've witnessed."

AdvanceKY is a public-private partnership geared to drastically increase academic achievement in mathematics, science and English (MSE). The program includes content-rich teacher training each year and incentives for students and their teachers to apply the additional time to achieving success for many more students, according to AdvanceKY Executive Director Joanne Lang.

"For example, among the first 12 schools, their baseline is 320 qualifying scores on AP MSE exams, but the first-year goal (2009 exams) is 703 qualifying scores. Every indicator suggests that this first cohort will exceed its year one goals."

Success is measured through AdvanceKY both in increased student enrollment and higher test scores on the AP exams.

Twelve schools make up this cohort, and 15 have joined a second cohort for the 2009-10 school year. AdvanceKY is replicating a model from Texas that has been proven successful for more than a decade in increasing

the number of minority and low-income students earning at least a qualifying score of 3 (on a scale of 1 to 5) on AP exams in the MSE subjects.

"In Kentucky, qualifying scores may earn students college credit wherever they may attend," Lang said "This also will earn students additional KEES (Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship) bonuses of \$200 for a 3, \$250 for a 4 and \$300 for a 5."

Janna Bailey, an AP Calculus teacher at South Laurel High, said AdvanceKY's support for student exam fees helps cover some of the costs, which has been a great incentive.

"I have had 100 percent of my students sign up for the AP exam, and in the past, some may have had to make a decision about whether to take the calculus exam or whether to take another exam because they could not afford both," Bailey said.

Aside from the financial assistance and incentives, more students are joining the ranks of these AP classes to get a taste of the future.

"They are going to get the idea of college expectations," Waddell said. "Sometimes kids are shocked by the work load and what is expected of them with very little guidance. This also gives them the opportunity to get college credit if they take and pass the AP exams. Basically, aside from paying to take the tests, these classes are a free shot to get instant college credit and to prepare for their future."

One of the key components of AdvanceKY is making sure the teachers are up for the rigor of these AP classes.

According to Lang, AdvanceKY targets lead teachers and master AP teachers who



Photo by Amy Wallo

Juniors Deanna Karr, left, Hannah Angel, center, and Kristin Baker test the water in their eco-columns during Athena Waddell's AP Environmental Science class at South Laurel High School (Laurel County). South Laurel High is part of the first cohort of schools in the AdvanceKentucky program.

mentor colleagues, guide vertical teams by subject matter and conduct prep exams. Training also is provided for all AP teachers and up to six Pre-AP teachers at a five-day summer institute as well as at other trainings throughout the academic year.

During vertical teaming, high school and middle school teachers collaborate four times a year on skills needed for student preparation for the AP classes.

"Teacher training is a core element of AdvanceKY's projected success," Lang said. "This training is specifically designed to reflect college-level content."

AP courses undergo an audit by the Col-

lege Board to assure syllabi, course materials and pacing comply with standards of college-level content.

"In the year in which they applied, Cohort 1 schools showed a 39 percent increase in the number of AP-qualifying scores on mathematics, science and English — up from 5 percent growth the previous year," Lang said. "We also were excited to see MSE enrollments increase from 1,400 to almost 2,200 for the 2008-09 school year. We are beginning to receive enrollment projections for the 2009-10 school year with schools indicating 50 to 300 percent increases."

Leathers said the teacher training has been instrumental in helping her focus on AP content, and has paved the way for fostering student excitement in the classroom, all of which is essential for students to eventually get the most out of their college experience

"It is much more difficult now for someone without a college degree to find a wellpaying job than it used to be," Leathers said. "Now, it is vital for the future of our students that we stress to them the importance of a college education. As my principal frequently says, 'We don't want them to go to college; we want them to graduate from college.' AP courses are an important part in preparing them to do just that, and that is why this grant is so important."

## About AdvanceKentucky

AdvanceKentucky is an initiative of Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation in partnership with the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI), which is funded by the Exxon-Mobil, Gates and Dell foundations. AdvanceKY received matching grants from the U.S. Department of Education Advanced Placement Incentive Program through the Kentucky Department of Education and the Appalachian Regional Commission. NMSI has committed \$13.2 million to AdvanceKentucky for a six-year period.

A request for proposals for Cohort 3 is available online. Applications are due May 29 with a limited number of site visits conducted in the fall and notification of awardees by Dec. 31.

High schools in Cohort 1 that implemented AdvanceKentucky in 2008-09: Anderson County, Barren County, Corbin (Corbin Independent), Hen-

derson County, Lone Oak (McCracken County), Marion County, North Laurel (Laurel County), Reidland (McCracken County), Scott County, Shelby County, South Laurel (Laurel County) and Warren East (Warren County).

High schools in Cohort 2 that will implement AdvanceKentucky in 2009-10: Bellevue (Bellevue Independent), Bowling Green (Bowling Green Independent), Bryan Station (Fayette County), East Jessamine (Jessamine County), Franklin-Simpson (Simpson County), Graves County, Highlands (Fort Thomas Independent), Hopkins County Central, Johnson Central (Johnson County), Madisonville North Hopkins (Hopkins County), Montgomery County, Paintsville (Paintsville Independent), Powell County, Warren Central (Warren County) and West Jessamine (Jessamine County).

#### MORE INFO...

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# Alliance produces right blend to teach science

Kim Mills, Grant Coordinator Bourbon County School District

Blowing up a pumpkin or exploding a car airbag to understand the chemical process of rapid gas expansion are just two examples of real-life learning experiences the Central Kentucky Middle and High School Science Teacher Alliance (CKMHS-STA) has done over the past three years.

The CKMHS-STA was formed as a professional learning community with the goal of improving the quality of middle and high school science instruction, student knowledge of the subject and increasing the number of highly qualified middle and high school teachers in the participating districts. The alliance consisted of six school districts — Bourbon, Clark, Harrison, Montgomery and Woodford counties and Paris Independent — in cooperation with chemistry and physics professors from Georgetown College.

The CKMHS-STA has been active for three years. It was funded by Kentucky's Mathematics and Science Partnership Program and included 27 science teachers in middle and high schools. The teachers and Georgetown professors met once a month during the school year and in several two-week summer institutes.

During the meetings, teachers were given in-depth content knowledge on various chemistry and physics topics such as velocity, motion and forces, gas laws, and acids and bases. They also gained knowledge from doing easy-to-learn labs using things from the average kitchen.

"The Science Alliance opened my classroom as a place both my students and I can learn new concepts about science," said Stephanie Chamberlain, a teacher at McNabb Middle School (Montgomery County). "I believe the professional development I have received is one of the reasons we have seen an increase in our test scores and the retention of science content."

As a result of their ongoing learning, teachers have worked to complete standards-based units that have been field-tested and are available online, as well as end-of-course assessment questions for middle and high school levels. The teacher leaders served as teacher mentors, observed participating teachers' classrooms, answered questions and discussed science issues with their colleagues.

"I think the best part of the alliance

has been that teachers are able to collaborate across school boundaries," said Colleen Morgan, a teacher at Paris High School (Paris Independent)."Working with teachers in other districts has helped bring new perspectives, and it also allows us to compare student difficulties and gain new ideas on how to handle harder topics in the classroom."

The monthly lectures given by professors at Georgetown College provided the teachers with in-depth knowledge on their content areas. Data from a teacher pre-test and surveys guided the professor's monthly scientific topics of discussion. Speakers would expound on the concept, similar to how they teach in their college classroom, then show a demonstration to reinforce how to meet the needs of different learning styles.

"The alliance has provided us with the opportunity to coordinate science expectations with high school and college faculty," said Shari Klausman of Harrison County Middle School. "I've never had that chance before."

When comparing the pre/post-test results of the Toledo Chemistry Placement Exam, which is designed to evaluate how well the student is prepared for freshman chemistry class, and a physics test for teachers, 80 percent of the participants demonstrated gains in content.

"The Science Alliance has provided me with new ideas, new approaches and a new perspective about teaching middle school science content," said William G. Conkwright Middle School (Clark County) teacher Tina Cornelius. "Through networking, professional development and training sessions, I feel better prepared to provide new and innovative strategies for teaching science."

Disaggregated student data from 2006 through 2008 showed increases in 91 percent of participating middle and high schools' science indices.

Teachers from the Bourbon County school district involved with the CKMHS-STA say they have learned many valuable lessons during the three-year project.

"The biggest lesson has been the constructive collaboration with secondary and higher education teachers to create a professional learning community, which guides our cohort group in increasing their schools' Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT) scores," said Bourbon County Project Consultant

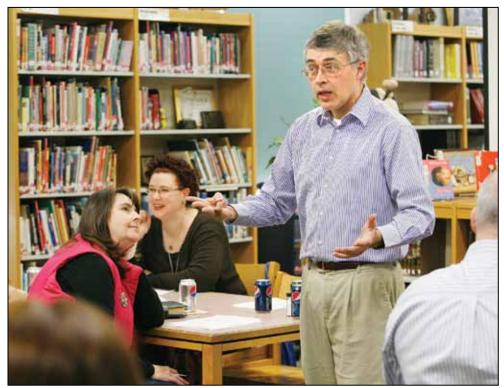


Photo by Amy Wallot

At Bourbon County Middle School, David Fraley, associate professor of chemistry at Georgetown College, shares with members of the Central Kentucky Middle and High School Science Teacher Alliance easy and interesting labs and demonstrations that the teachers can use in their classrooms.

Tom Mills. "Not only did our secondary participants gain valuable content knowledge of their subject area and expertise of significant content lab demonstrations, but our university partner was able to communicate with our participants as to what content knowledge and lab experiments would benefit incoming freshmen to any university program."

"The Science Alliance has been a great opportunity to interact with 27 motivated, secondary science teachers," said David Fraley, professor of chemistry at Georgetown College. "I've been particularly encouraged with their enthusiasm, their gain in content-knowledge and the top-notch lesson plans they have prepared."

During their time together, teachers also learned new researched-based philosophies to assist in their classrooms. They participated in a research-based creative teaching strategies workshop. This professional development activity is a uniquely active and exciting learner-centered approach that unlocks the innate talents of teachers, turns the focus away from lecture-based teaching toward instructor-led small group interaction and helps students adapt, adopt and apply what they learn.

Pre/post surveys illustrated that teachers had obtained a new outlook on ways to increase student grades and attitudes toward subjects. The group also experienced a differentiated instruction presentation from the Central Kentucky Special Education Cooperative. This is an ongoing theme, which is now being followed up with a discussion thread on Moodle, a free Web application that educators can use to create effective online learning sites. The teachers will continue to network with each other through e-mail and online discussions using Moodle or Skype, an online application used to communicate for free through voice and video calls as well as instant messages.

"In our meetings, structured time was provided for teachers to work together in planning instruction, observing each other's classrooms and sharing feedback," said Kim Mills, grant coordinator for the Bourbon County school district. "These have proven to be the successful attributes, which characterize our professional learning community."

#### MORE INFO...

Kim Mills, kim.mills@bourbon.kyschools. us, (859) 987-2180

# New regional boundaries approved by KSBA board

Wrapping up a two-year process, the Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA) Board of Directors has approved a new regional alignment for the association's 174 member boards. Although only 27 boards will change regions, the new regional makeup will make the association's 12 regions more equitable in the number of boards per region. One goal of the study and alignment change was to improve local boards' opportunities to have members serve on the association's board of directors by reducing the size of some of the largest regions. The regional alignment had been in place for at least 30 years.

The original proposal would have moved 48 boards into new regions. At its December meeting, the KSBA board directed that those boards be surveyed on the proposal. A total of 27 boards formally voted to approve the changes. Another 21 boards requested to remain in their current regions, and all of those requests were honored by the KSBA board.

Here is the new regional membership of the association:

First Region, Chairperson: Felix Akojie, Paducah Independent; Ballard, Caldwell, Calloway, Carlisle, Crittenden, Fulton, Fulton Independent, Graves, Hickman, Livingston, Lyon, Marshall, Mayfield, McCracken, Murray, Paducah

Second Region, Chairperson: Jane Haase, Owensboro Independent; Christian, Daviess, Dawson Springs, Hancock, Henderson, Hopkins, McLean, Muhlenberg, Owensboro, Trigg, Union, Webster

Third Region, Chairperson: Jeff Eaton, Allen County; Allen, Barren, Bowling Green, Butler, Caverna, Edmonson, Glasgow, Grayson, Logan, Monroe, Ohio, Russellville, Simpson, Todd, Warren

Fourth Region, Chairperson: Lisa Hawley, Cloverport Independent; Bardstown, Breckinridge, Bullitt, Cloverport, Elizabethtown, Hardin, Hart, Jefferson, LaRue, Marion, Meade, Nelson, Spencer, Washington, West Point

Fifth Region, Chairperson: Larry Dodson, Oldham County; Anchorage, Carroll, Eminence, Frankfort, Franklin, Gallatin, Harrison, Henry, Oldham, Owen, Scott, Shelby, Trimble, Williamstown

Middle Cumberland Region, Chairperson: Chris Watts, Adair County; Adair, Campbellsville, Casey, Clinton, Cumberland, Green, Metcalfe, Monticello,

Pulaski, Rockcastle, Russell, Science Hill, Somerset, Taylor, Wayne

Upper Cumberland Region, Chairperson: Sissy Cawood, Pineville Independent; Barbourville, Bell, Clay, Corbin, East Bernstadt, Harlan, Harlan Independent, Jackson, Knox, Laurel, McCreary, Middlesboro, Pineville, Whitley, Williamsburg

Central Kentucky Region, Chairperson: Fern Reed, Montgomery County; Anderson, Berea, Bourbon, Boyle, Burgin, Clark, Danville, Estill, Fayette, Garrard, Jessamine, Lincoln, Madison, Mercer, Montgomery, Paris, Woodford

Upper Kentucky River Region, Chairperson: William Owen, Lee County; Breathitt, Hazard, Jackson Ind., Jenkins, Knott, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Owsley, Perry

Northern Kentucky Region, Chairperson: Mike Combs, Campbell County; Beechwood, Bellevue, Boone, Bracken, Campbell, Covington, Dayton, Erlanger-Elsmere, Fort Thomas, Grant, Kenton, Ludlow, Newport, Pendleton, Silver Grove, Southgate, Walton-Verona

Eastern Kentucky North Region, Chairperson: Marshall Jenkins, Morgan County; Ashland, Augusta, Bath, Boyd, Carter, Elliott, Fairview, Fleming, Greenup, Lewis, Mason, Menifee, Morgan, Nicholas, Race-

land-Worthington, Robertson, Rowan Russell Independent

**Eastern Kentucky South Region**, Chairperson: Jeff Stumbo, Floyd County; Floyd, Johnson, Lawrence, Magoffin, Martin, Paintsville, Pike, Pikeville, Powell, Wolfe

## Owensboro Independent honored by American School Board Journal

From the American School Board Journal

Owensboro Independent School District has been selected as a first-place winner in the American School Board Journal's 15th annual Magna Awards program.

The district was recognized in the under-5,000 enrollment category for its "Instructional League" program that addresses the lack of athletic opportunities for elementary school students. The district has created leagues in basketball, soccer, volleyball and cross-country track for elementary school students. Students participate at no cost and even receive free uniforms.

Owensboro is a three-time Magna Awards winner, having received a first prize in 2004 and an honorable mention in 2001.

Indiana's Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation, Oregon's Springfield Public Schools and Washington's Bridgeport School District earned grand prize honors in this year's contest, which is presented with the support of Sodexo School Services. All of the winning districts were recognized at the National School Boards Association's annual conference in April in San Diego.

The Magna Awards recognize districts across the country for outstanding programs that advance student learning and encourage community involvement in schools. This year's three grand prize, 15 first place and 15 honorable mention winners were selected based on three enrollment categories: under-5,000 students, 5,000 to 20,000 and 20,000 and above.

An independent panel of school board members, administrators and other educators selected winners from more than 340 submissions. This year's applicants came from more than 45 states. Districts in 22 states were winners or honorable mention recipients.

# Legislative briefing for superintendents

On March 30, the Kentucky Department of Education and the Franklin County school district hosted the annual Superintendents' Legislative Briefing.

A webcast of the briefing has been archived and may be viewed online. The materials provided to attendees also are available online.

To view the webcast, go to:

- Video and Audio: mms://video1. education.ky.gov/OnDemand2009/ Annual\_Supt\_3302009.wmv
- Audio Only: mms://video1.education.
   ky.gov/OnDemand2009/Annual\_
   Supt\_3302009-audio.wma
   To see the materials, go to:

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=09SLBS



The Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) will host its Bluegrass regional meeting at 10 a.m. Wednesday, May 20, at Mercer County High School.

Both KASA members and nonmembers are encouraged to attend.

During this meeting, school administrators will see a technology in a classroom demonstration and take a tour of the new Mercer County High School in Harrodsburg. Lunch will be provided by KASA.

Those wishing to attend should RSVP to Joy Campbell at joy.campbell@mercer.kyschools.us.

For more information, contact Campbell at the above e-mail address or call the KASA office at (800) 928-5272.

www.kasa.org



Photo by Amy Wallot

## Healthy classroom

Kindergarten teacher Gretchen Donovan hands kindergarten student Leah Ryles a disinfecting wipe to clean the tables with during her class at the Early Learning Village East (Franklin County). Donovan won the Healthy Classroom Hero award from Clorox for an activity in her classroom that taught students about how quickly germs can spread from person to person. Donovan and the school each received a \$10,000 prize. Donovan appeared on an episode of ABC's The View to accept the award.

## Bulletin Board

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov



Photo by Amy Wallo

William Natcher Elementary School (Warren County)

## Conferences & Workshops

# Operating a classroom business in elementary, middle school

The Kentucky Council on Economic Education will host a workshop July 21 in Georgetown that focuses on how to set up a simple classroom business in grades K-8. The workshop will include free lunch, resources and a tour of the Toyota plant. For more information, visit www.econ.org/pd/professionaldevelopment.html and select the workshop of interest link to register.

www.kcee.org/forms/workshops

## KySTE annual conference

The Kentucky Society for Technology in Education's (KySTE) annual conference will be held June 17-19 in Shepherdsville. This year's theme is "Building the Foundation of Education with Technology." Early registration ends May 18.

www.kyste.org/conference

# Health conference and gardening workshop

The Kentucky Green and Healthy Schools Health Conference and School Gardening Workshop will be June 10-11 at the University of Kentucky. For more information, contact Nathan Rudder at the Tracy Farmer Center for the Environment at nathan.rudder@uky.edu.

# Workshop for K-12 teachers in Niagara Falls

A National Endowment for the Humanities grant will support a pair of week-long workshops to be held this summer for K-12 school teachers. The workshops, July 13-17 and July 20-24, at Old Fort Niagara in Niagara Falls, N.Y., will focus on American history and culture, specifically the history of European-Native American interaction. Stipends cover most expenses for participants. Classroom teachers and librarians in public, private, parochial and charter schools, as well as home-schooling parents, are eligible to participate. For more information, e-mail crossroads@niagara.edu.

www.niagara.edu/crossroads

# National Diversity in Libraries conference

The 2010 National Diversity in Libraries Conference, "NDLC2010: From Groundwork to Action," will take place from July 14-16 in Princeton, N.J. The National Diversity in Libraries Conference (NDLC) is a biennial event that serves as a regional meeting for

library staff members to discuss diversity issues, especially issues common to the host region's culture. Interested participants can submit a proposal for presentation by e-mail (as a Word document or PDF attachment) to ndlc2010@princeton.edu and also direct any questions to this address. Proposal submission deadline is Oct. 2.

#### Early childhood education

The 23rd annual Kentucky Early Childhood Summer Institute will be June 15-16 in Louisville. This year's theme is "Promoting Excellence in Early Childhood Education," with author Sue Bredekamp serving as the keynote speaker. For more information, contact Annie Rooney French at (502) 564-7056.

#### **Arts educators conference**

The Kentucky Art Education Association will hold its annual conference Oct. 16-17 in Lexington. Participants can earn professional development hours after 3:30 p.m. Friday and all day Saturday. For more information, contact Lisa Jameson at jamesonl@fuse.net.

www.kyaea.org

# **Kentucky Aviation Teacher Institutes**

The 2009 Kentucky Aviation Teacher Institutes for grades 5-12 teachers will be in June. Three three-day and one evening institutes will be held at:

- Rough River State Resort Park, June 9-11
- Natural Bridge State Park, June 16-18
- Lake Cumberland State Resort Park, June 23-25

Topics covered through inquiry/problem-based learning will be applied mathematics, science-aerodynamics and social studies-navigation. Kentucky Core Content 4.1, Kentucky Program of Studies and national standards will be used. Teachers will receive an actual airplane flight (optional), aviation lessons and materials for their classrooms and the opportunity to join an aviation professional learning community through e-learning.

Overnight lodging is provided for Tuesday and Wednesday for those who live more than 40 miles away. To register or for more information, contact Paige Hankla at phankla@ky.gov or (502) 564-0296.

## Free workshops

KET's Regional Education Consultants are ready to visit schools or offices to present free workshops on how its range of instructional resources can help teachers and students reach proficiency. All workshops support Kentucky and national academic standards and are approved by the Kentucky Department of Education for professional development training. They can be tailored for groups, general audiences or content-specific teams. Some newer workshops address both the 21st-century classroom and students with the incorporation of relevant Web 2.0 tools and current International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards. KET offers EILA PD credit for most sessions. To schedule a workshop or to have one designed to meet your school's specific needs, contact your regional KET education consultant or call (800) 432-0951, ext. 7261.

## 2009 Lincoln Tri-State Summer Institute

The Kentucky Geographic Alliance, the Geography Educators' Network of Indiana and the Illinois Geographic Alliance present the 2009 Lincoln Tri-State Summer Institute June 21-29 for P-12 social studies teachers interested in learning new ways to introduce the life of Abraham Lincoln into the curriculum. Three hours of college credit are available through Western Kentucky University at a reduced cost. This institute is limited to eight participants from each state. For more information, contact Kay Gandy at kay. gandy@wku.edu.

#### Contests & Other Events

#### **KVHS** summer schedule

Registration for online Summer 2009 Kentucky Virtual High School (KVHS) is underway. Session dates are as follows:

- online registration closes, May 27
- courses open, June 3
- courses close, Aug. 5
- last day to drop without a fee, June 18

A summer catalog is available at: http://kvhs.blackboard.com/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab\_id=\_104\_1

Full credit and credit-recovery courses include:

- Algebra I and II
- Geometry
- Spanish I and II
- English I-IV

Check the KVHS Web site in mid-May for more information on fall courses and session dates.

# Forestry and entomology program

A residential program investigating Kentucky's natural resources at Lake Cumberland is available for high school students June 1-5. The University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service and the Kentucky Division of Forestry are hosting this week-

(Continued on page 15)

## BULLETIN BOARD (continued)

long leadership program focusing on forestry and entomology. For more information, contact Doug McLaren, dmclaren@uky.edu, at (859) 257-2703.

www.ca.uky.edu/forestryextension/ KentuckyForestLP.php

# **KYVS Hybrid Grant Program**

Kentucky Virtual Schools (KYVS) can no longer provide free Blackboard course shells for hybrid instruction. Teachers who have implemented hybrid or blended learning, but whose districts have limited funding, may find it difficult to continue implementation with a cost of \$25/student. To address this issue, KYVS is implementing a Hybrid/ Blended Grant Program. Applications will be accepted from teams of two teachers. Grant-winning teams receive Blackboard use at no cost, and each participating teacher also receives free enrollment for 30 students. Those interested should go to the Kentucky Department of Education's Secondary and Virtual Learning Web site, click on the Hybrid Learning button and download the application and evaluation rubric. All applications are due in KYVS office by June 30.

w w w.e d u c a t i o n.k y.g o v/KDE/ Instructional+Resources/Secondary

## **AP Reader Project**

Teachers can work with the Educational Testing Service on the AP Reader Project, June 5-11, in Louisville. For more information, contact Traci McBurney, traci.mcburney@adeccona.com, or Pamela Platt, pamela. platt@adeccona.com.

## Kentucky Teacher Hall of Fame

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2010 class of inductees into the Louie B. Nunn Kentucky Teacher Hall of Fame. The deadline is July 15. For more information, contact Cathie Bryant, cathie.bryant@wku. edu, at (270)745-4664.

http://edtech.wku.edu/deans\_office/ Gov-LBN\_KY-THF.htm

# **National Evaluation Institute**

The Consortium for Research on Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation (CREATE) is requesting proposals for papers and posters for the 17th annual National Evaluation Institute, Oct. 8-10, in Louisville. The purpose of the institute is to disseminate information about the theory, research and best practices of evaluation in educational accountability; program, personnel and student evaluation; and educa-

tional policy and technology. The theme of the institute is "Research and Evaluation that Inform Leadership for Results." Proposals are due by June 1.

www.createconference.org

#### Online AP exam reviews

The Kentucky Virtual High School (KVHS) will provide a free online exam review for Kentucky students preparing for the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) exams. AP exam reviews include released AP examinations and support materials licensed from the College Board. AP exam reviews are available for art history, biology, calculus AB, European history, literature and composition, language and composition, macroeconomics, Spanish, U.S. History, and U.S. government and politics. Those interested should have a school contact e-mail Kari Welch at kari. welch@education.ky.gov to register and receive enrollment instructions. The contact person will be responsible for communicating enrollment instructions to each participating student. For more information, call KVHS at (866) 432-0008.

# **Building Engineering, Science and Technology**

The University of Kentucky College of Engineering is conducting a summer program called BEST (Building Engineering, Science and Technology) for high school students who have completed 10th grade. The camp will be June 7-12. This program provides a pre-engineering curriculum to students who are interested in pursuing engineering degrees and who will contribute to the diversity of the educational experience in the College of Engineering. This unique opportunity to gain pre-engineering academic skills will prepare students for their junior and senior years of high school, as well as their college engineering careers. Course work is hands-on problem solving and requires use of pre-calculus mathematics, chemistry, physics, engineering design and college leadership skills. For more information, contact Metty Jiju at mjiju@ engr.uky.edu.

www.engr.uky.edu/outreach/UKBEST. html

## Steve Kimberling Youth Leadership award

The Kentucky Center for School Safety and the Kentucky School Boards Association are accepting nominations for the Steve Kimberling Youth Leadership in School Safety Award. The award will be presented at the annual Safe Schools Conference, Oct. 12-13, in Louisville. The award is open to Ken-



Photo by Amy Wallot

## School spirit

Members of the West Jessamine High School (Jessamine County) marching band perform under the direction of Rex Payton during the 92nd National City Boys' Sweet Sixteen basketball tournament at Rupp Arena in Lexington March 20. The music classes available to students at West Jessamine include marching band/instrumental ensemble, color guard, string orchestra/chamber strings, choral music (general chorus) and Advanced Choral Music (concert choir).

tucky public elementary, middle and high school students. To submit a program for the award, contact Tamara Stewart, tamara. stewart@ksba.org, (800) 372-2962, to get an entry form. Nominations are due July 31.

# Online professional development

e-Learning Kentucky will be offering multiple high-quality, standards-based, facilitated and interactive online professional development courses during the 2009 summer semester. Courses begin June 17 and end July 29. With the help of sponsors, courses will be \$25 and offer from six to 12 PD or EILA hours. Registration opens May 1.

www.kyvs.org/webapps/portal/ frameset.jsp?tab\_id=\_123\_1

#### Resources

# Web site rates effectiveness of educational programs

Educators looking for useful, educator-friendly reviews of the evidence supporting mathematics, reading and other programs including textbooks, technology and professional development approaches can find effectiveness ratings on the Best Evidence Encyclopedia (BEE) Web site. The Web site synthesizes the results of hundreds of studies by numerous researchers to rate the

effectiveness of educational programs and practices. Recently published on the site is a review of beginning reading programs. The BEE is produced by the Johns Hopkins University School of Education's Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education (CDDRE) under funding from the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education.

www.bestevidence.org

#### NSTA Web site

Many students make fundamental career decisions by the time they get to middle school, so engaging students in science at an early age provides them with more career opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers.

The National Science Teachers Association Science Matters Web site provides you the opportunity to:

- read reports and policy statements from key stakeholders on why science matters
- determine if a child is receiving a quality science education by using an easy-to-use science education checklist
- find practical ideas to help a child learn science
- learn how parents, teachers, informal science educators and community and business organizations can work together to foster better learning experiences in K-12 science

www.nsta.org/sciencematters

Sharetta Green, an 8th-grade student, paints a landscape during Elizabeth Berry's art class. The school's visual arts department has been recognized in the Scholastic Art Competition with awards for students in the painting and drawing categories.



Teacher Devin Clifford and 8th-grade students Shawn Rhodes, left, and Jasmine Richards measure distance and shadow size during a science experiment.



Seventh-grade student Catherine Dawson raises her hand to answer a question during Brian Franklin's math class. Sharing a table with Dawson is 6th-grade student Alishia Wilkins.



Art teacher Elizabeth Berry prepares paint palettes for students before class. The students were painting landscapes.



Seventh-grade student Quluda Hashi gives a smile to the camera.

# Let's hear it for the

GITS
Photos by Amy Wallot

This is the second of a two-part profile about single-gender public schools in Kentucky. The April issue of *Kentucky Teacher* featured Frederick Law Olmsted Academy North, also in Jefferson County.

With the start of the 2008-09 school year, Frederick Law Olmsted Academy South became the first all-girls middle school in Jefferson County.

"A rigorous program of study at Olmsted Academy South (OAS) prepares our students for the future through academic challenges, community service, cultural enrichment and career exploration," said Principal Betty Graham.

The school, which serves a diverse population of students in grades 6-8, highlights such academic areas as language arts, technology and the arts and humanities. OAS also offers award-winning related arts programs, such as art, band, chorus, drama and orchestra. Stu-

dents also are invited to participate in Advanced Placement program classes and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

For the current school year, OAS adopted a school-wide social skills curriculum called CARE (Creating a Respectful Environment). "Students meet each morning in their CARE groups to discuss social issues and values which will improve their daily interactions with teachers, other students and in the community," Graham said.

At OAS, teachers provide instruction that has been deemed best practice for female students. The school uses a resource of master teachers who are experts in different content areas. These master teachers provide weekly extensive professional development to the teaching staff that aims to benefit all students.

The school also offers a wide range of extracurricular activities, from a knitting club to a school cheerleading squad. During the current school year, the school added track and field, volleyball and lacrosse. The activities help the school build a rapport with the local community and other middle schools in the district.



Sixth-grade students Essence Sklodoski, left, Mayvi Rodriguez, center, and Brittney Blessett wait in the hall before entering science class.